

Title: Come to Jesus

Text: Hebrews 12:18-24

Hebrews chapter 12 beginning at Vs 18.....(Read Vs 18-24)

Would you join with me in a moment of prayer

Father, we thank you for your Word. And we thank you for the joy of studying it. Thank you for the good news of the gospel that Jesus saves. Thank you that Jesus invites us to come to Him. That all who are burdened down with sins and the problems of this life, He invites us to come unto Him and we will find rest for our souls. So, we thank you for this. And we pray that Jesus will be lifted up and exalted in our midst, here this morning. For we ask this in His precious name...Amen/

++++++

This particular portion of God's Word begins the fifth warning section of the book of Hebrews. And the warning is really summarized in Vs 25, which we will look at next week. It says, "See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking."

And if I may introduce this by telling you ahead of time, so that you can follow a little better. In each of these warning passages much of what is said is hypothetical. That is that there is no way that this could possibly occur. And yet it is a warning to Christians to whom much has been given. Because from them much is required. And if you keep that in your mind you will see what He is doing in this passage. He is telling us that under the O.T. there were some awe some things that were done and said. But, we are not under that system. We are under a new system. A new covenant. And we have come to better things. But, the point is...they couldn't endure that...how much more we who reject the message that is much better. To whom much is given, much is required. And that is the way that He is using this throughout these warning passages.

So, this is the fifth warning passage beginning here at Vs 18. And it deals with our matter of ^{our} refusal of what we have learned. And he is warning these Jewish believers not to go back to the safe haven of Judaism, avoiding the
ner

persecutions and sufferings that were coming to christians. But, to realize that this was a part of God's plan for them.

Now, I want to look at this in several ways. Just two of them today. (1) In verses 18 to 21 we are going to examine it ^{as} based on a contrast with the O.T. law. Vs 18 to 21. Then we are going to look at Vs 22..concerning the coming of better things.

I must tell you right out that I can hardly wait that vs 18 and vs 22 is one of those amazing contrast in the Bible. Much like Ephesians chapter two. Where for three verses Paul told us that we were dead in trespasses and sins, we were walking according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience, following the lusts of the flesh, by nature children of wrath. Then Vs 4 says..BUT...GOD..WHO IS RICH IN MERCY....Tremendous contrast.

We are in sin and we need help. But God is rich in mercy and love. Praise God for that.

This is similar. Vs 18 "For you have not come"...Vs 22."But you have come That little word "but" is a tremendous word of contrast. This whole portion of scripture is built around that little phrase "BUT YOU HAVE COME.

It is a perfect tense. Both in vs 18 and Vs 22. The Point is this: Vs 18 "You have not come" from the standpoint of staying there and remaining there. Unto the old system of Mt. Sanaï. But, Vs 22, YOU HAVE COME" and you are remaining there to Mt. Zion, a heavenly system. There is a contrast here between that which is earthly, under the law, and that which is heavenly, and under the new covenant of the blood of Jesus Christ.

() Now, let's look at verese 18 to 21.this contrast with O.T. law. What we have not as believer's come to. We must remember that we are not under that anymore. We are not under law, but we are under grace, according to Romans 6.

() In terms of the mountain, Vs 18. It says "you have not come to a mountain that may be touched and to a blazing fire, and to darkness and gloom and whirlwind.

Now, the word "mountain" vs 18 is not actually in the text. But, it is down in Vs 22. And there is an obvious contrast. So, we know that He is referring to Mt. Sinai in Vs 18.

We would know that, also, from the little word "that may be touched." It was something that was earthly. Something you could have touched. And in the O.T. in Exodus 19, which we will look at in a moment, you were not allowed to touch it. while God's presence was there giving the 10 commandments to Moses. It was an awesome sight.

But, it was a mountain that was earthly. The mountain that is coming is heavenly, which we will look at in a moment. So, there is a contrast here. And there are four things that describe this mountain in Vs 18 that gives us an idea of how much of a contrast it is to our faith and belief in Christ today. We have the words fire, darkness, gloom and whirlwind.

(1) First of all, the word "fire." It says "a blazing fire." It was not an ordinary fire. The entire mountain was a blaze with fire. Fire is a symbol of the presence of God. We know that when God spoke to Moses He spoke through a burning bush. When God appeared to Isaiah it was through the burning coals on the altar.

But, fire is really a symbol of judgment. So, I look at Mt Sinai in contrast to what I have in Christ, and there it is judgment. Here..Romans 8:1 says that "there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ."

The all-consuming fire was everywhere. It scared the daylight out of people. (2) We also read that there was a darkness there, according to Vs 18. And the darkness or the word used for darkness has the idea of "hard to penetrate." There is fire..True..But also a darkness that hangs over you. And it is hard to penetrate.

(3) And the third word is "gloom." In other words it is so dark that you can feel it. It is so gloomy that you can actually feel it.

So, if you have read that so story in Exodus 19 about the children of Israel at Mt. Sinai and Moses being given the Law by God and you thought that maybe it was just a little casual demonstration. You had better read it again.

The entire mountain is aflame. Yet, there was darkness and gloom that hung heavily over the mountain. You could just feel the darkness and gloom.

(4) The Bible, also, says that there was a whirlwind, there. What does that mean? From this word we get our word "hurricane". Imagine that. A violent storm is going on. All this fire and the blackness and the gloomy feeling. With the wind flowing in hurricane force. It must have been awe some.'

Is it no wonder the people were crying out: "STOP IT MOSES."

Why did God allow all of that to happen in the giving of the law? FOR ONE REASON. Because the law's message has always been judgment. The Bible tells that the law was never given for salvation. The law was given because of transgression. It was added because of the ungodly. The law brings us to condemnation. That all the world would become guilty before God. What a terrible sense. But, those children of Israel were exposed to what judgment of the law really meant.

I would like you to take your Bibles, now, and turn to Exodus 19. I just want to read that story. About what happened at that mountain. That awe some sense of God's fiery judgment. How it condemned. And People realized that they were under the judgment of God. And they were all guilty in the presence of God

Vs 9....(Read Vs 9-25)

And the ten commandments were given. Quite a sight, right? Back to Hebrews, again.

You know, according to the Bible, that whole mountain was a flame with fire and smoke. There was an earthquake. And it was black. So black you couldn't penetrate the darkness. The kind of darkness that brings that gloomy feeling. And a violent storm..winds blowing with the force of a hurricane. And the people, frankly, are frightened. They wanted it all to stop.

So, in terms of the mountain. It is quite a contrast, isn't it, in terms of what you and I know about Jesus christ.

() In terms of the message, also, it is quite a contrast. In Vs 19 and 20, it says..(Read Vs 19-20a)

Now, I would like you to know a couple of things about that message.

(1) One, the intensity of that message. The word "heard" in Vs 19.."those who heard".. is a very interesting word. Depending upon the case of the noun that followed it, it could mean that you heard and understood the words. Or, it could mean that you just heard the noise.

Let me give you an example. Do you remember when Paul was on the road to Damases? The Bible says that the people around Him heard the voice but didn't understand the message? You see, they heard the voice but they didn't understand. It was just noise to them. But, it was true what Paul reported. They did not understand the message.

We have the same thing here. Those people did not understand what God was saying. All they heard was the terrible voice of the Lord. Which is the voice as a blast of a trumpet. The thunders of the world...the blast of a trumpet.. the Bible says that God's voice is like that.

Isn't it great that God, at times, restructs his mighty voice to speak to us? Elijah learned that Gdd spoke to him with a still small voice. But, if God wanted to excersie his verbal power --why, all of us would beg.."stop it..you are breaking my ear drums. That is the point of this verse. We cann't stand it any more. Stop it. Whatever this allful noise is.

~~Why was God letting this go on?~~

(2) The second thing I would like you to see was their inability to indure the very message that God was giving to Moses. You ask, Why did God do that? Why did God make his voice so loud that the people begged him to stop? That they couldn't even endure the message?

It was done for an illustration. Because you see, in truth no one can endure the message of the ten commandments. The very message that God was giving to Moses..not a single one of us can endure that. There is not a person in this audience, right now, who is able to endure the message of the law. The Bible says that if you offend in one point, just one little point...you are quilty of breaking all of it. If you told just one lie...one lie or a thousand lies..it matters not. You are quilty of breaking the entire law. And that law doesn;t bring life and hope. It brings judgment. Condemnation..

Thank God, we are not at Mt. Sinai anymore. We need to understand the tremendous contrast between law and salvation. Every now and then someone will say "Hay! I am not as bad as so and so." And by saying that they think that they will then escape God's judgment. Oh, no. If you offend in one point, God says, you are guilty of everything. That is why, you see, we need Jesus so bad. I don't care who you are or what you have done in your life, or what you think you haven't done, you need Jesus. You just don't know it. You need him desperately. The law condemns and it judges people. And the message of God proves. They couldn't even endure the sound of it. It was too much. They couldn't even bear what was demanded, according to Vs 20.

Now, what is that referring to? That is not referring to the 10 commandments. Even though that is true. What was commanded was the restriction about touching the mountain. And you talk about not being able to bear it. You couldn't even step over the boundary line without getting shot through with a spear, or stoned to death. And that includes animals as well.

() Which brings me to the end of Vs 20. In terms of the mountain we see the also display of God's judgement. In terms of the message, they were not able to endure it or bear it. But, in terms of the manner in which the consequences were revealed, again we see what a contrast between the law and now.

Vs 20 "If even a beast touches the mountain, it will be stoned."

You say, that isn't fair. An animal strays across the line and dies. Yet, God said, one animal crosses that line, kill it.

I look at this and I ask, "What is God doing? What is he picturing?" The answer is that God is picturing the tremendous gap between a Holy God and sinful men and women. And the consequences are always death.

Isiah 59 says our sins have separated us between ourselves and God so that He will not hear."

The gap between us and God is tremendous. And God pictured it there. And the consequences He pictured by taking an animal that strays across the line and commands that it be put to death. And all of this is to show that God is a God of judgement. A God of holiness.

Do you want to live by the standard of the law? You had better think again. The law was given by God to give us the knowledge of sin. And to show us how unworthy we are. And why we need the grace and forgiveness of Christ.

The law was given to us to show us that we are guilty before God. That we deserve his judgment. That none of us are able to stand in His presence. The law was given to drive us to Christ, says Gal. 3:24. It forces us to Christ so that we maybe justified by faith.

Every time I read the law I know that it is useless for me to possibly think that I can keep it. No Way.

But, I thank God for what Romans 10:4 says, "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes."

Why? Because Christ fulfilled the law. He, alone, satisfied the righteous demands of the law for every man, woman, and child. Which is: the soul that sins shall die. Whether one sin or a thousand sins, He died for us. What a contrast.

() Look at Vs 21..In terms of the mountain, the message, the manner in which these consequences were revealed. But also in terms of Moses, himself.

Now, Moses is up there on the Mountain. He has a rare privilege. He is hearing God speak and he is understanding the message. Yet, he is in the midst of fire, and darkness and gloom. And he can't see. It is a terrible situation. But, he is there receiving God's message. And yet, look at what Moses said. Vs 21, "I am full of fear and trembling."

If you think being in the presence of a Holy awesome God was a joy, it was not. Moses is literally saying, "Out of fear, I am operating." And he was trembling. Let me tell you, he was scared to death. His body was shaking with fear as he was listening to this awesome message from God.

It is no wonder Moses was a changed man when he came down from that mountain. No wonder.

When I look at all of that I think how easily we slip by that message of the law. How easily we avoid that message. We don't want to hear about a God of judgment and a God of justice, and wrath, and holiness.

We want the God of love. And praise God we have a God of love. But, listen, my friends, if you ignore God's love message in Jesus Christ, you had better now forget that God of the law. Because that God of the law, according to the Bible, is going to judge sin. If you refuse to accept the judgment of Christ at the cross, you are going to experience all of the wrath of God upon your life. You cannot escape the holiness and justice of God. No matter who you are or what you have done. You refuse Christ and you are in great danger. () Well, let's come to verse 22. Now, that we have had all this judgment, let's come to the good news. That was the bad news. Now, the good news.

Vs 22 "But you have come"...You see, statement of fact. "You have come." I don't know about you, but I believe that once I really come to know Christ as saviour, I am secure for ever. Not because of my performance..not because of anything that I am going to do, or not do, but because of God. You see, my salvation is based upon God. What he does. And I don't have any question about Him. I never doubt it at all.

And there are many reasons that he give concerning security. One of which is in Vs 22. "You have come"..And it means that you have not only come to that point, you are now remaining there and nothing can change ~~you~~ it.

Isn't it good to know that when they came to the law, he said, "you have not come to the law." Meaning you don't come in the sense of remaining there. PRAISE GOD. God never intended for anyone to remain under the law.

But, we come to Mt. Zion. According to vs 22 to 24, there is the coming to better things in the life of a christian. That includes 7 specifics. 7 things to which God says 'we have come.'

Again I remind you that Vs 22 begins with the little word "But." A word of tremendous contrast. Now, what have we come to?

(1)Number one, we have come to a place where we will spend an eternity. Did you know that? We have already come to it. That is not something I receive when I die. I have already come to it. According to Vs 22 , "you have come to Mt. Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem."

The place where you and I are going to spend eternity is described in three ways in Vs 22.

(1) One, it says that it is Mt. Zion. You say, "wait a minute. Isn't Mt. Zion a hill in Jerusalem?" Yes, it is. In fact, it is the highest of the hills in Jerusalem. And it is also the place where King David is buried.

But, Mt Zion is more than a hill. Zionism. What is Zionism? The return of Jews to the land. The messianic hope. WHAT DOES MT. ZION REPRESENT?

Mt. Zion represents the future. The eternal glory promised to Israel. According to the Bible, the place where I am going to spend an eternity is called Mt Zion.

Psalms 48; verse 1-2 says, ...(Read Vs 1-2)

It is more than just a place. According to the Bible it is the dwelling place of the eternal, holy, matchless, wonderful, almighty God. And I am going to be there. And spend an eternity with Him.

(2) it is also called "the city of the living God," here in Vs 22. The very place where God dwells. To be with Him is the ultimate goal. It is.

You know, I do believe that when we think about heaven, we have all kinds of problems. And the reason we have so many problems is because we are all wrapped up down here. And so we need to be reminded by the Word that we are headed towards a heavenly home. PRAISE GOD. But, we must be reminded about that because we often forget it. It is sort of like a ticket. We have it. We know it will be good to get us there. But, we put it in our pocket and forget about it. And we don't think too much about it.

And then when we do think about it, do you know what we usually discuss? The benefits. Like: How come there will be no marriages in heaven?...Or...what is my mansion going to look like?...Or...what about those chr crowns we are going to get?...BOY! HOW SELF_CENTERED AND MAN_CENTERED WE ARE. We are always looking at heaven in that manner.

Are we going to have harps, sitting on clouds all day?...NO...NO...We are going to be quite active, according to the Bible.

But, why do we ask those questions?

The great ultimate hope of each and every person is to see the God who made us. It is to be with Him forever.

You see, we learn where we are in commitment by our ability to identify with that. IS HE REALLY IT? Is that really what we are looking forward to? Or, is it still the benefits and blessings. OH, praise the Lord, there are many benefits and blessings.

But, listen, is it Him? Is our desire to be with Him. To come to the city of the living God. The God who made us. The infinite God who made us. Who knows us backwards and forwards. The one who limited himself in a human body, who died for us, who rose again. And now is exalted in glory. And we are going to see him. That is the ultimate hope.

() It is also described as "the heavenly Jerusalem. That reminds me of Gal 4 where it contrast the law with our salvation in Christ by saying that there is a Jerusalem on the earth, and a Jerusalem above.

In the book of Revelation, when that place that a lot of us call heaven, comes down out of the sky, this glorious place. Do you know what it is called? THE NEW JERUSALEM. WE HAVE ALREADY COME TO THE HEAVENLY JERUSALEM.

I am already a citizen there. Phil 3:20 ..my citizenship is in heaven from where I am looking for Jesus to come."

I already belong there. What more security do we want? PRAISE GOD. What better things than they had at Mt. Sinai. We have already come to the place where we are going to spend eternity.

(2) Number two, we have also come to the presence of angels., according to Vs 22 Now, I want you to notice something here. The past phrase of Vs 22 says, "to myriads of angels."

Now, look at Vs 23.."to the general assembly." The phrase "general assembly doesn't belong in Vs 23. In the Greek text it comes right after the word "angels". And it really is dealing with angels. The phrase "general assemble" is a general assemble at all. It is the word for "festal assemble." A festive gathering. We would translate "celebration".

If you were doing it literally, here is how it would read: "to myriads of angels in festal assembly."

Why does the Bible throw that one in there? I mean, big deal, so we are going to see angels. Now, I want to see them alright. But, why is that so important at this point? Do you know why? Because at the giving of the law, the angels were there. But, they were there, only, in judgment.

And according to this passage, it is so beautiful, because we as believers have come to a fantastic array of angles. Thousand upon thousands of them. Only, they are in celebration this time. Not in judgment.

The Bible says that over one person that comes to Christ, one sinner that repents, all the angels in heaven rejoice.

You know, I want to meet some of those angels, don't you? And the Bible says that when we do it is going to be one grand glorious celebration. We will party like we have never partied before. It will be one grand celebration.

In Revelation chapters 4 and 5 in telling us about the great gather in heaven in the future, all of God's angels, thousands upon thousands, are singing and praising God and saying: "Worthy is the lamb that was slain." What a day that is going to be.

Well, dear friends, I have already come to that. Myriads of angels. And do you know what? God not only says that I have come to that, but now in my life, He actually uses a few of those angels, who were so excited the day that I accepted Christ, He uses a few of them to even protect me in this life until the time when God says I am going to go home. Until that day that God calls me home/

Did you know that? God gives us angels to protect us. And some of us need more than others. Do you know what I mean?

You can't see them. But they are everywhere. Isn't it great to know that there is a whole camp of angels surrounding you. And just taking care of you until the time when God calls you home. And then we are going to meet this wonderful company of angels who got so excited the day you got saved.

Man, it is great. Can't you just see what is going on in heaven?

Now, I am not just trying to be positive for positive sake. You see, Paul is trying to turn us on. And half of us are discouraged and depressed. You have not come to Mt. Sinai. Listen, Mt. Sinai is a place to get depressed over. It is a place to be afraid. But, you have come to a place where you are going to spend an eternity and to the presence of angels in a festal assembly, in great celebration. They were thrilled the day you got saved. And just wait until you see them.

(3) Number three, we have come to the people of the church. What a wonderful thing to say to a Jewish audience. He wrote this book to Jews, you know. And He said in Vs 23 "church of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven."

The church of the first-born. Now, the church is viewed as still being on earth. And their names are written in heaven. Notice, the church isn't in heaven. But the names are enrolled in heaven.

And it says "first- born." That is not referring to chronology and time. But, it is talking about inheritance. The first-born son is the one who gets the inheritance. For example, in Col 1:15 Christ is called the "first-born". The heir of God. but we are joint heirs with Christ. We also are first-born. PRAISE THE LORD. We are all going to get the marvelous inheritance of God. We have come to that.

And the Bible says that our names are written in heaven. It is in the perfect tense in Greek. It says "who are enrolled" ..Perfect tense. Meaning: it is there to stay. Once saved always saved. No one can take it away. Praise the Lord.

Did you know that your name was written down in the lamb's book of life before the foundation of the World? Our names are there. And they are there to stay. PRAISE THE LORD.

We have come to the people of the church.

(4) Number four. We have come to the person who is our judge. Now, remember the contrast again and you will understand why he said this.

Vs 23.."to God the judge of all." What is he saying? Now, at Mt Sinai it is judgement..death.. consequences...

But, here, he is saying that you as believers, you have come to Him, personally, and this time..no fear. No fear at all. There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. And you have come, now, to the place of having personal access to the person of God. You and I are invited to boldly come into God's presence. Something that was never encouraged at Mt. Sinai. But, you and I can come to God always in prayer.

And one day, we are going to be in His very presence, physically. Praise the Lord. What else?

(5) Number five, we have come to a partnership with O.T. believers. According to the end of Vs 23, "and to the spirits of righteous men made perfect."

You say, "How do you know that is O.T. believers?"

Well, they are spirits, according to the Bible. Which means they have not yet been united with their bodies, yet, in resurrection.

And it says "they have been made perfect." The word "perfect" means "coming to a completion." Having been made complete. It is talking about the work of Christ, which is the whole subject of this book. There were just and righteous men in the O.T., who died. And their spirits have been made perfect. By the work of Christ.

And we who believe, now, after Christ, we have come to them, also. O.T... N.T. believers shall share in eternity together. We are all one.

(6) And number six..we have come to our high priest, who makes it all possible. Beautiful words. Vs 24.."and to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant."

We have come to Jesus. He who told us to come. "Come unto me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Now, it says "we..have..already..come." And we are there to stay. We are with Jesus forever and He with us. Jesus said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you. Lo, I am with you always, even until the end of the age."

(7) Then he says, finally, we have come to the provision for our sins. He says, "and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel"

He referred to that blood of sprinkling back in chapter 9:13-14. His blood was shed for our sins. But what is the meaning of the last phrase of Vs 24? *"which speaks better than the blood of Abel."*

Why bring up Able? Well, Able was the first martyr, true. But, if you remember the story, according to the Bible, when Cain killed Able, his brother's blood from the ground was ~~acting~~ ^{asking} as it were for veangencous. Very interesting.

The bllood of Christ was better, by way of illustration, than Able's. Ables blood, because his brother killed him, cried out for vengeance. But, Christ blood, instead of vengeance, promises parden, and cleaning, and forgivnes

What a fantastic way to end that verse. It speaks better things than Able. Able's blood cried out for ~~any~~ vengeance. And we deserve vengeance. We deserve judgemnet. We should have to face our sins. But, praise God, Jesus died and paid for them. And he offers you pardon and cleasning, and forgiveness.

How could you refuse Him? How could you go another day and turn your back on the one who loves you so much?

Let's Close in Prayer